



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
-----------------	-------------	----------------------	---------------------	------------------

10/752,674

01/08/2004

Shigeto Uchiyama

Q-79060

4454

23373 7590 06/07/2006

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
2100 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W.
SUITE 800
WASHINGTON, DC 20037

EXAMINER

MARX, IRENE

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1651

DATE MAILED: 06/07/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

DETAILED ACTION

Claims 15, 18-21, 23-26, 29 and 32 are pending and subject to restriction.

Election/Restriction

Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:

- I. Claims 15, 18-21, and 23-26 drawn to a composition comprising equol, classified in Class 514, subclass 183, for example.
- II. Claim 29 drawn to a method of producing equol, classified in Class 435, subclass 119, for example.
- III. Claim 32 drawn to live cultures of bacterial strains, classified in Class 435, subclass 252.1, for example.

Inventions III and II are related as product and process of use. The inventions can be shown to be distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) the process for using the product as claimed can be practiced with another materially different product or (2) the product as claimed can be used in a materially different process of using that product (MPEP 806.05(h)). In the instant case the product as claimed can be used in a materially different process of using that product such as for obtaining antibodies or as host cells in processes involving the use of recombinant DNA or for the production of single cell protein for nutritional supplementation.

Each of groups I and III is directed to separate and distinct inventions, Group I is directed to a composition comprising equol in product-by-process format and Group III is directed to strains of microorganisms belonging to a specific species. The products of groups I and III would be expected to have distinct morphological, functional and physiological properties as evidenced by divergent classification, process of making and process of using. These products are not required one for the other, since equol is old and well known in the art and can be prepared microbially or by other means, such as extraction from mare urine. See, e.g., Chang *et al.*, page 1892, bridging paragraph between col. 1 and col. 2 or Merck Index, page 618.

The several inventions above are independent and distinct, each from the other as they have acquired a separate status in the art and require independent searches, particularly with

Art Unit: 1651

regard to the literature searches. Clearly, a reference which would anticipate one of the above groups would not necessarily anticipate or even make obvious any of the others.

An undue burden would ensue from the examination of multiple compositions having different utility and morphological/physiological properties. Burden lies not only in the search of US Patents, but in the search for literature and foreign patents and examination of the claim language and specification for compliance with the statutes concerning new matter, distinctness and scope of enablement.

For these reasons restriction for examination purposes is proper.

The examiner has required restriction between product and process claims. Where applicant elects claims directed to the product, and a product claim is subsequently found allowable, withdrawn process claims that depend from or otherwise include all the limitations of the allowable product claim will be rejoined in accordance with the provisions of MPEP § 821.04. **Process claims that depend from or otherwise include all the limitations of the patentable product** will be entered as a matter of right if the amendment is presented prior to final rejection or allowance, whichever is earlier. Amendments submitted after final rejection are governed by 37 CFR 1.116; amendments submitted after allowance are governed by 37 CFR 1.312.

In the event of rejoinder, the requirement for restriction between the product claims and the rejoined process claims will be withdrawn, and the rejoined process claims will be fully examined for patentability in accordance with 37 CFR 1.104. Thus, to be allowable, the rejoined claims must meet all criteria for patentability including the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 101, 102, 103, and 112. Until an elected product claim is found allowable, an otherwise proper restriction requirement between product claims and process claims may be maintained. Withdrawn process claims that are not commensurate in scope with an allowed product claim will not be rejoined. See "Guidance on Treatment of Product and Process Claims in light of *In re Ochiai*, *In re Brouwer* and 35 U.S.C. § 103(b)," 1184 O.G. 86 (March 26, 1996). Additionally, in order to retain the right to rejoinder in accordance with the above policy, Applicant is advised that the process claims should be amended during prosecution either to maintain dependency on the product claims or to otherwise include the limitations of the product claims. **Failure to do so may result in a loss of the right to rejoinder.**

Art Unit: 1651

Further, note that the prohibition against double patenting rejections of 35 U.S.C. 121 does not apply where the restriction requirement is withdrawn by the examiner before the patent issues. See MPEP § 804.01.

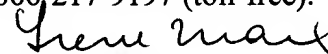
Applicant is advised that the response to this requirement to be complete must include an election of the invention to be examined even though the requirement be traversed.

Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a diligently-filed petition under 37 C.F.R. § 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17(h).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Irene Marx whose telephone number is (571) 272-0919. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (6:30-3:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael G. Wityshyn can be reached on 571-272-0926. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300 .

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Irene Marx
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1651